



HISTORY HAPPENS

Official Newsletter of the Alabama Historical Commission

FEBRUARY 2023

A Word from Lisa

Hello everyone!

In January, a series of storms impacted our state and caused damage in many areas including some of Alabama's most beautiful and beloved historic districts and homes. If you were affected by this storm, I encourage you to visit our [disaster resources page](#) and please contact us with any questions you may have about your historic property.

February is Black History Month! The AHC assists in documenting many African-American places to preserve and protect this important history. This is partly accomplished through our preservation programs such as the Alabama Register, National Register, tax credits, historical markers, CLG grants, and cemetery program. We also work closely with the Black Heritage Council (BHC), which serves as an advisory arm to the AHC. At the time of its founding, the BHC was the first council of its kind created in the nation. We also invite you to visit many of our historic sites to celebrate Black History Month including the [Freedom Rides Museum](#) in Montgomery, [Old Cahawba Archaeological Park](#) in Orrville, and more. You will hear stories of the extraordinary impact African Americans had at these sites and how they made their voices heard across the world.

In closing, we are saddened to hear of the passing of former AHC Commissioner Robert Jefferson "Jeff" Jakeman. We send our condolences to his family during this difficult time. You can read about his life and accomplishments [here](#).

Best regards,

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

AHC Disaster Resources

Before, during, and after a natural disaster, we want to help you preserve your historic property!

-  [AHC Helpful Info](#)
-  [FEMA Assistance](#)
-  [National Park Service](#)

Contact Paige Thomas
334-230-2643

Alabama's Black Belt earns title of National Heritage Area

On January 13, President Biden signed into law the recognition for Alabama's Black Belt to be named a National Heritage Area.

With this new designation, the historic but impoverished region will have more opportunities to receive federal funds for historic preservation, tourism, and economic development.

"Nine of the ten poorest counties in Alabama are in the Black Belt. Historic preservation in these counties is destined to become a great economic engine for the constituents of the AHC, especially as the Black Heritage Council continues its mission of introducing resources that the agency provides to communities in that area," said Chairwoman of the Black Heritage Council Lateefah Muhammad.

The Black Belt makes up 19 counties in Alabama. Read the full story [here](#).

35 historic black churches receive \$4 million investment, including five in Alabama

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund announced its first round of Preserving Black Churches grants to 35 historic Black churches across the U.S. totaling \$4 million.

This action fund will help churches and congregations reimagine, redesign, and deploy historic preservation actions to protect the legacies and stories these buildings share.

The 2023 Preserving Black Churches Grantees by Preservation Category are as follows:

Endowment and Financial Sustainability Grants

*16th Street Baptist Church, Inc.
Birmingham*



Capitol Project Grants

*Old Ship African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Montgomery*

*First Missionary Baptist Church
Hayneville*

*Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church
Notasulga*



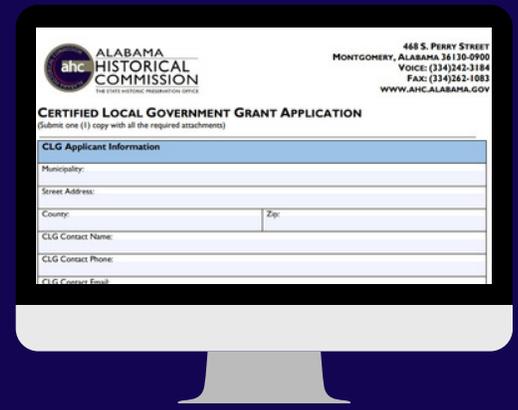
Project Planning Grants

*Old Sardis Baptist Church
Birmingham*

For more information on these grants, click [here](#).



16th Street Baptist Church, Birmingham



Certified Local Governments are encouraged to apply for grants by March 15th!
Apply today!

NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Check out the new faces at AHC!



Joseph Massey
GIS Specialist



Rose Stokes
Goat Hill



Cheryl Godfrey
Finance



Melinda Hickman
Property Manager



Georgina Leal
Goat Hill



Mallory Robinson
Finance

NATIONAL ATTENTION



City of Decatur's Historic Preservation Commission recently received a National Alliance Preservation Commission Excellence Award for their "Designing Decatur: 200 Years of Building" coloring book which was funded by AHC's CLG grant program. [Check it out!](#)



In December 2022, Site Director of the Freedom Rides Museum Dorothy Walker was interviewed for a special documentary on WENY ABC out of Erie, PA to be aired on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in celebration of his life. The program was aired across the country and highlighted the Freedom Rides Museum and other historic venues across Montgomery and Selma. This documentary can be viewed [here](#).

Save the DATE!

February 4
Road to Freedom Wagon Tour
Old Cahawba

February 11
Winter Quarters
Confederate Memorial Park

February 18
Living History
Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson

February 20
Speaker Series - Kurt Vetter
Pond Spring

March 4
School of the Solider
Confederate Memorial Park



"Never let anyone-any person or any force-dampen, dim or diminish your light."

-Congressman John Lewis